

HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE TYPE B (Hib, H flu)

What is *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) disease?

Haemophilus influenzae type b is a bacterial disease which is serious and sometimes fatal. *Haemophilus influenzae* is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis (which is a swelling of the tissue that covers the brain and spinal cord) in children ages two months to five years of age in the United States. Another serious infection caused by this organism is epiglottitis, (an infection of the airway which may block the breathing passage and lead to suffocation). *Haemophilus influenzae* may also cause infections in the lungs, blood, joints, bones and covering of the heart. This bacteria does not cause the "flu" (influenza).

Who gets Hib disease?

Hib disease is most common in children two months to three years of age, but can also occur in older children, and occasionally in adolescents and adults. Children who attend day-care may be at higher risk of getting Hib disease.

How is the disease spread?

Hib disease spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, especially if they do not cover their mouth.

What are the symptoms of Hib disease?

Symptoms are fever, vomiting, nausea, tiredness, and possibly a stiff neck. Because the bacteria affects different parts of the body, other symptoms may occur.

How long can an infected person spread Hib disease?

An infected person can spread Hib disease as long as the bacteria are present in the nose or throat, and sometimes after they appear to be well. After one to two days of treatment an infected person can no longer spread the disease.

Can a person get Hib disease again?

Yes. One infection does not protect from getting Hib disease again.

What is the treatment for Hib disease?

Antibiotics are used to treat serious infections.

Should people exposed to an infected person be treated?

Household members, day-care center classmates and children less than four years old may need to take a medicine called Rifampin. Persons who have had casual contact such as occurs in a regular classroom, office or factory setting do not need treatment.

How can the spread of Hib disease be prevented?

Vaccines are available to protect against Hib disease. The vaccine series should be given to children beginning at two months of age. This is especially true for children attending day-care centers. For more information about the vaccine, contact your local health department, or the Utah Department of Health, Immunization Program (801) 538-9450.

Where can I get more information?

- Your personal doctor
- Your local health department, listed in the telephone directory
- The Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology (801) 538-6191 or Immunization Program (801) 538-9450

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